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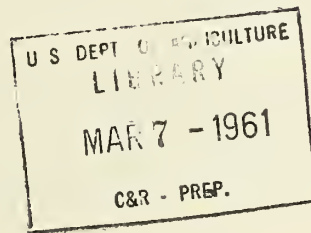
PROGRAM PROJECTION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From a

Visit to Eight States

by

Representatives of Federal Extension Service



FOREWORD

This document sets forth the major findings of a joint exploration of program projection progress by representatives of the Federal Extension Service and Extension Service workers in eight States.

The major purpose of the study was to measure progress and analyze procedures used in the program projection process as it was carried out under different State conditions. Four teams of two persons each from the Federal Extension Service conferred with a representative group of State and county extension workers in the States involved. Members of county program projection committees and subcommittees participated in a number of the discussions.

The report is presented in two parts. Part I covers the major findings of the team members. Part II sets forth some of the conclusions and recommendations arrived at jointly by the team members and the Program Projection Steering Committee in the Federal Extension Service.

While the document is designed for all State extension staff members, it should be of particular interest to those directly concerned with the process of involving local people in program determination.

AN EIGHT STATE STUDY OF PROGRAM PROJECTION, OBSERVATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PART I. TEAM OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

A. CONCEPTS IN PROGRAM PROJECTION

The meaning of the term "Program Projection" varied among both State and county workers. These variations in understanding as to scope and to projection influenced the methods used and results achieved.

1. The Broad Concept

The broad concept is one in which county program projection committees are encouraged to consider all problems affecting the social and economic well-being of people. It recognizes the fact that the solution to some or many of these problems may rest with public and private resources other than the Extension Service. It assumes that the role of the extension worker is to help local people identify their problems and to call upon all of the resources available to them in working toward their solution. It further assumes that those problems that fall within the area of extension's subject matter competence would become the basis for developing the extension program.

This concept was the declared intent in several States. Such purpose was indicated by statements of the State extension directors, by policy statements in literature, and by the involvement of other agencies and organizations at both State and county level.

Evidence of this broad concept was illustrated by county consideration of such problems as water needs, spoil banks, zoning, taxation, roads, health, and sanitation, in addition to those more specifically related to agriculture and family living. The extent to which organizations and agencies, other than Extension, helped in analyzing problems and in assuming responsibility for followup action varied greatly. One example of good follow through was the action of a farm organization in promoting appropriate legislation. There was some evidence that when the people defined a problem that clearly lay well outside the field of extension subject matter competence, there was no definite plan for referring them to other sources of help, i. e., health department, highway officials, etc. The frustration resulting increased a tendency for committees that were originally set up to follow a broad concept to lapse into the traditional extension programming pattern.

It was observed that in States officially committed to the broad concept, there were some State and county extension workers who either had not been fully informed about or had not accepted such a concept.

In most counties the only problems recorded were those accepted as falling within the area of extension's program responsibility. However, many extension workers and committees recognized and accepted the broad concept and believed in the opportunities it offered. One administrator stated that program projection should be as broad as rural development. In counties operating with rural development, these two concepts were considered one and the same thing.

In the States visited there was no evidence of concern on the part of agencies or organizations regarding extension's leadership in such a broad study of county problems and potentials.

2. The Traditional Extension Concept

The traditional extension concept is confined to the customary scope and way of developing and conducting extension programs. This is the declared policy regarding program projection in a few States. The basis from which this judgment stems are two-fold: (1) To strengthen the extension program through better analysis of problems; (2) to acquaint more people with the values of the extension program. In those States previous attempts at program development such as "Land Use Planning" and "Community Development" had been concerned with all problems of all people. Thus it was the considered judgment of State extension administrative and State extension committees that program projection should be restricted to problems that the extension service was prepared to deal with.

Problems beyond the usual extension program were occasionally raised in committees but were considered beyond the scope of the committee's concern. It was stated that since agents and committees were just beginning to make progress and gain confidence in extension program development, it would be better not to broaden out too much now.

The present resources of the State extension service were also a factor in the choice of the traditional extension concept. Involvement of new people was less in traditional concept counties than in broad concept counties.

3. Understanding and Application of Projection

The term "projection" was variously interpreted as meaning:

- a. Projection of trends or forces (in the analyses step).
- b. Projection of extension programs (in the planning process).
- c. Projection of extension goals.
- d. Projection of extension's personnel needs.

By and large, when projections were made they applied to extension's program rather than to the effect of trends. Although projected trends were well outlined in several counties, only one State carefully delineated the projection of trends in its literature.

B. INITIATION AND INVOLVEMENT

In all States the extension director initiated program projection with the State extension staff either by discussion with administrative and supervisory staff or with the entire State extension staff, or both. The usual pattern was to discuss the meaning and purpose, including ECOP's request for action in 10 percent of the counties in 1955. Most directors made a special effort to relate program projection to previous efforts at long-time program planning. There was evidence that not all staff members grasped the full meaning and possibilities of program projection from this initial meeting. There were few instances where resident and research faculties were informed of program projection activities although some specialists had involved their research counterparts in the preparation of materials.

1. State Extension Staff Committees

In a few States, leadership of program projection remained in the director's office, with specific assignments made to individuals or committees on a temporary basis. A more common pattern was to appoint a State steering committee responsible for developing plans, procedures, materials, and for staff training. Size of committees and representation vary greatly from 3 persons (agriculture and home economics supervisors and agricultural economists) in one State to 10 in another. Most committees represent administrative, supervisory, and specialist groups.

2. State Leaders and Supervisors

In all States the supervisory staffs in agriculture and home economics appeared to be well informed although not equally involved nor committed to the value of program projection. In some States there was little or no involvement of 4-H Club personnel at the college level.

In most States the supervisory teams were responsible for stimulating program projection work in the counties.

3. Specialists

Among the specialists, agricultural economists appeared to have been involved more frequently than others. In about one-half of the States each specialist (or specialist group) had been actively

involved through the preparation of situation data and trends related to their subject matter for the use of agents and county committees. The degree of understanding and appreciation of program projection on the part of specialists appeared to be very directly related to the type and amount of their involvement.

4. Pilot Counties

Every State visited had started program projection in at least one or more counties in each supervisory district. In some States there was a definite effort to use the pilot county as a training ground for both agents and State staff members. Specialists helped to prepare background data. Supervisors and agents developed organization plans and procedures that were tested in the pilot counties. In other States only pilot county agents and a few State workers concerned were given information as to the meaning and purpose of program projection during the first year. In a few instances the agents and some State staff members thought it was "something Washington wanted" that would be done in a few weeks with no thought of any continuing effort or lasting value to the county.

It was significant to note, however, that many "pilot" counties were involved in a much more comprehensive analysis of situation and needs, and that both agents and committee members saw program projection as a continuing educational process.

5. Involvement of Those Outside Extension

In three States the director or an associate director explained program projection to farm organizations, agricultural and a few other agencies and organizations. In two of the States this was done for information with little evidence of continuing involvement of these groups. In one State an advisory committee from organizations representing a wide range of public, private, professional, and commodity interests was organized. At their first meeting, program projection plans were explained and situational data presented. The main purpose was to enlist the support of their members in program projection at the county level. This State plans to call the committee together to receive progress reports and to form area committees (or subcommittees of State advisory committee) to work on some problems that concern more than one county, i. e., forestry, etc. Several specialists and State leaders explained the purpose of program projection to leaders of organizations and agencies with which they had personal or professional contacts.

C. TRAINING ACTIVITIES

It was observed that training activities varied greatly. In general, greater emphasis was placed upon "how to do" -- i. e., organizational procedure, representation and committee structure--than upon the content of "what to do"--i. e., situation analysis, problem identification, possible alternatives, etc.

Training was provided through some or all of the following:

1. Conferences of State staff.
2. Annual and district conferences of agents.
3. Special training conferences for State staff to prepare them to assist county extension agents.
4. Working groups of specialists and supervisors on preparation of specific materials for use in counties.
5. Special conferences and workshops for agents:
 - a. Those in pilot counties;
 - b. All agents.
6. Use of written materials.

Specialists who had not been actively involved in any of these training sessions appeared to have little knowledge of what was going on in the counties or to feel any responsibility for counseling with agents about problems, trends, or future direction of their line of work. Those State workers who had participated in training sessions were interested and alert to the possibilities of developing more effective extension programs.

D. COUNTY ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE

In all counties a countywide committee gave overall guidance to program projection efforts. Some were organized for this purpose; other counties used committees that had been in existence before program projection had started. There were more men than women and very few older youth on committees. Some county committees appointed a steering or executive committee to handle certain assignments and to conduct interim business.

1. Existing County Committees

Existing county groups were designated by such names as county extension advisory committee, county extension committee, county extension council, or county executive committee. In many, but not all cases, these committees were supplemented with additional persons when program projection was begun. In addition to representatives of agricultural groups, others added to the committees were business and professional people, bankers, ministers, mass media persons, etc. These persons were often visited personally by the agents to inform them and to enlist their interest.

2. Newly Organized County Committees

Sometimes, either in the absence of an existing county committee or authorized by such committee, a special county program projection committee was established. This kind of committee was quite broad in its representation and included many who were not formerly involved in developing extension programs.

3. Types of Subcommittees

In some cases the usual existing extension committees became subcommittees of the county program projection committee. These were the several commodity committees, such as crops, dairy, forestry, etc., the county home demonstration council, the county 4-H council, etc. It was observed that these groups were largely oriented toward special interests and operated much as they had in the past.

In other counties the countywide program projection committee first defined areas of concern, then developed subcommittees accordingly. One county set up the following subcommittees: health and safety, house and farm buildings, family life, farm and home management, community development, field and forage crops, marketing and organization, youth, industry and labor, foods and nutrition, production per unit of livestock, etc.

In at least one State there was practically no consideration of problems other than those of agriculture.

The size of subcommittees ranged from 3 to 15 persons. The number of subcommittees also varied greatly. The first step for each subcommittee was to secure and analyze data regarding their particular area of concern. All subcommittees reported to their county committees.

Reports of county committee findings and recommendations were frequently given to county commissioners, county boards of agriculture and/or farm organizations.

E. ANALYSIS OF SITUATION AND TRENDS

1. Sources and Kinds of Data Considered

a. State Offices

A few States developed and supplied counties with general social, economic, and population data. Some also supplied data in specific fields of marketing, livestock, nutrition, youth, etc. These data varied from census data only to projected trends of many kinds of data. Such materials were

supplied agents in a variety of ways. Some were developed by specialists in their subject-matter areas for all agents.

In one State, specialists wrote each agent a personal letter regarding data and problems relating to that county only. In one State, specialists were asked to work on situation and trends when visiting counties on other programs. Some State specialists reviewed the materials in county reports. In one State, only sample situational and trend materials were supplied agents as an example of how to do their own. Both supervisors and specialists have met with some county committees, usually in the early meetings of committees.

States' materials emphasized first the county, second the State, and last national and international. Two States limited practically all of their data to the county situation. Very little attention was given to regional or international information. In one county, mention was made of competing market situations in adjacent States. To some degree, assistance was supplied on the State level by State statisticians, State conservation departments, State departments of education, State departments of health, State departments of welfare, cooperative marketing associations, etc. Both specialists and agents noted that evidence of trends was easier to secure in some areas, as population, housing, and forestry, than in such fields as furnishings and plant pathology.

b. County

While most agents were supplied by the State office one way or another with background data and trends, the assembly of these materials was primarily an agent job. Outlook materials were used, as were the county breakdown from the census. Experiment station and extension studies often were used as sources of information. County agencies, such as the employment service, health department, and schools, supplied information on request. Frequently the local data needed was unavailable. A few counties used local surveys. These were of two kinds. One type was somewhat broad, covering several areas of inquiry, and done by the entire county program projection committee. State specialists often assisted in the formulation of the survey device. Another type was done by specific subcommittees. An example of the latter was a market potential survey, another, a youth recreation need survey. Apparently the more participation by local people in the collection of data, the greater the interest aroused.

Most data used was of a historical or current nature. Projection of trends was quite spotty but was done on occasions. Seemingly, much more data was easily available in agriculture than in home economics and youth areas.

Location, selection, and classifying the most appropriate data and trends was generally conceded to be a difficult job. It was also recognized that much material was of a surface nature and lacked depth.

2. Uses of Data

One of the most common uses of data was the consideration of it by the various county program projection committees and subcommittees. Very frequently agents presented such materials. Time for presentation to county committees varied from 2 hours to as much as all day or parts of several days. Some presentations were verbal only. Some agents used charts, others slides. Some materials were duplicated. Infrequently a discussion technique was designed for use by committees. Participation of committee members was common.

Agents often made two comments: "We needed more time," and, "We needed better preparation and more visuals."

One observation indicated that people were more likely to be interested in data after than before a problem area had been identified. Consequently, when subcommittees were named, they were most apt to seek further information.

It was common to ignore the projection of trends and to state a projection of program goals instead. However, one county committee did project some trends as: "There will be fewer full-time farmers; the full-time farmers will operate larger farms; there will be more part-time farmers; there will be more nonfarm rural people."

It was not clear whether the committee developed these by analysis or accepted such findings from others. How much consideration was given to the implication of these trends was not revealed.

3. Identifying Problems

The kinds of data and trends selected and presented to county program projection committees predetermined to a large extent the nature of problems considered. A second factor influencing the identification of problems was the kind of committees operating, whether the traditional extension committees or those with very broad representation with several people new to Extension.

The time given to analysis also was a factor. Nevertheless, most agents and committee members felt strongly that a fresher, newer, and more realistic look was given to the consideration of data and trends in their county. After a rather brief consideration of data, situational materials, surveys, if any, and trends by the county committee, the usual next step was delineation of areas for further study and investigation by subcommittees.

Determining factors in selection of problem areas to investigate seemed to stem from the leadership, the people's concept of Extension's traditional role, and occasionally from an enlarged vision of the situation. The background of committee members and the influence of subject-matter departments sometimes affected the committee decision as to what problems should be given further attention.

Following are a few illustrations of the ways in which problems were stated. These are picked at random from several county reports.

- a. Many families have low incomes.
- b. Many farms have shortage of forage crops in their rotation.
- c. Youth needs understanding and encouragement.
- d. Food habits are poor because of lack of knowledge of what makes a good diet, food prejudices, etc.
- e. Marketing to get the full utilization of forestry products.
- f. Need for better financial planning.

State summaries of problems were sometimes used to help orient the State and county staffs to major areas of concern. They were also brought to the attention of other agencies and groups on a State and sometimes a national basis. One such State summary selected a group of major problems as:

- a. Many farms too small.
- b. Failure to use existing know-how.
- c. Inefficient farm operation and management.
- d. Poor use of land resources.
- e. Underemployment of farm labor.
- f. Low productivity of labor.
- g. Poor marketing and distribution.

4. Consideration of Alternative Solutions

No evidence was gathered of the extent to which alternative solutions were clearly brought into the open and discussed before coming to a decision regarding recommendation for action. Such discussion was possibly held but no records are available, nor was it discussed with agents. On the face of reports, it would seem that a direct jump was frequently made either from a consideration of the situation or of specific problems directly to program recommendations.

Agents, however, did suggest the need of more help with committees in all the steps in program projection.

F. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNTY PROGRAM PROJECTION COMMITTEES

In States that were doing program projection on a broad basis, with representatives of many organizations and agencies considering any type of problem the people brought up, the conclusions and recommendations of the county program projection committee indicated direction but did not get into specifics of programming. These were left to be worked out later by the Extension Service or by other groups or agencies that assumed responsibility for action in a particular field, as for instance, the solution of a health problem by the department of health.

In States that were concentrating their program projection efforts on areas of Extension's traditional responsibilities, recommendations of the county program projection committees tended to be somewhat more specific but were still too general to be considered an extension program. In at least one State, each county had a steering committee composed of the chairmen of their subcommittees. This steering committee reviewed all recommendations and established priorities. In some cases they also recommended additional staff needed to get the job done. The steering committee then presented its report to the entire county program projection committee for final adoption. The agents liked this plan. It gave them a clear basis for developing plans of work and a secure feeling of support from an informed group in the county. Agents in the counties said more people knew what they were doing and why, and that the calls for "extras" had been fewer. In another State it was evident that program recommendations were made on the basis of workload of present staff rather than upon the importance of jobs to be done.

In general, program recommendations were short-range, although there were several notable exceptions. Recommendations also tended to be subject matter oriented rather than problem centered. This latter may be due to the high proportion of commodity representatives on the county committees and the fact that more information on situation and trends related to production and marketing was available for consideration by the committees.

G. DEVELOPING THE COUNTY EXTENSION PROGRAM AND PLANS OF WORK

In counties where an overall county extension committee and the program projection committee were one and the same, the flow of work from analysis to problem identification to recommendation for action appeared to be continuous. To some extent this appeared to be true where extension committees had expanded into a county-wide program projection committee. In one State a definite distinction was made between the process of analyzing situations and trends, and of identification of problems, and the process of planning an extension program directed toward the solution of the problems.

The most common pattern of developing the extension program and plans of work was to refer program projection committee recommendations to the extension group most concerned; thus family living to the home demonstration planning committees, youth to 4-H, agriculture to commodity or other special interest committees. Agents reported much better participation in extension programs where many people had been involved in the entire process.

Almost all agents and many specialists indicated that county program projection reports were very helpful to them in developing their plans of work. They felt much more confident that their plans were in line with the problems as stated by the people.

They felt that program emphasis, content, and methods have all been improved although not all recommendations that were given high priority ratings had been implemented through plans of work. Some of the weakness might have been due to previous commitments or expectations from people who had not yet been involved in program projection. Another reason might have been that the program projection process was new and in many instances a limited number of areas have been considered. For instance, there has been little depth analysis of human nutrition situations and identification of basic problems on which to base an extension program.

H. EVALUATION

There was little evidence of an organized plan to evaluate either the process or the results of program projection work. One State had studied their pilot counties including: how initiated, organization and planning process, and results. Other bases for evaluation were: (1) the reaction of agents, specialists, and supervisors; (2) the increased involvement of local people; (3) the development of new program areas and the adjustment of present programs; and (4) the fact that counties were continuing their program projection efforts.

I. VALUES OF PROGRAM PROJECTION REPORTED BY STATE AND COUNTY EXTENSION WORKERS

Without exception, all local leaders as well as county and State extension workers who had been involved in program projection work, stated that the results realized were definitely on the plus side. The values most frequently mentioned were:

1. Provided a better basis for allocating extension resources.
2. County reports revealed what people believed to be their most pressing problems. The analytical process identified more "high level" problems calling for help from several specialists.

3. Provided for better use of time on priority problems and better plans of work.
4. Provided opportunity for specialists to learn problems of the people and the agents and to give help in developing extension programs.
5. Good education went on in committees. People looked farther ahead and got a better view of the resources and limitations of their county.
6. Planning aroused interest that lead to action.
7. Programs were based on overall situation in the county.
8. More people knew about extension service and supported the program.
9. It helped people to see that there are some problems for which extension either does not have adequate specialist help or research findings are not yet available; and still others which an extension staff is not qualified to help analyze, define, or solve.

PART II. SOME CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the push at the start and the short time the States have been involved, great progress has been made. This is not a thing that can be done quickly. Where time has been given for discussion and growth of understanding on the part of the people, their recommendations are generally very good.

Many of the questions about program projection appear to be related in some way to the ideas, or opinions, various extension workers and county committee members have of what it is, how it is or should be done, and what it may be expected to achieve. They need to know how broad a concept is to be encouraged in the State. If it is a broad concept as defined in this report, each county extension worker needs help with ways to interest and to involve other organizations and agencies. They also need to know how and when to direct the people to other sources for help on problems that do not lie in Extension's area of responsibility.

States that encourage the broad concept need to help both agents and county committees to clarify the relation between the process of analysis and problem identification, and the development of extension programs in agriculture, family living, and youth work. They need to understand: (1) How to determine what problems other groups are better qualified to help solve. For example, a school or health problem may be solved through extension public affairs education meetings, plus action by other organizations. (2) The importance of establishing priorities among the problems requiring extension assistance. (3) How to explain program projection to the general public and report the results of committee work.

Whether or not all States agree on the same concept, name, and working terminology seems to us to be relatively unimportant. Throughout Extension's history many fine educational innovations have resulted from the different approaches States have made to the solution of similar problems. However, we are of the firm opinion that until all extension workers in each individual State have the same understanding about what program projection is and how it is being done in their State, program projection will not achieve its best results.

Recognizing that States vary in the progress of program projection activities, our observations lead us to believe that careful attention to the following items would strengthen the work in most States.

- A. States need to clarify their concept and to follow through to see that all State and county extension workers understand what is involved and how to carry out program projection in line with that concept.
- B. All specialists need to become more deeply involved in program projection than appears to be true at the present time.

Many specialists who could give real help to agents and county committees are not doing so, either because they do not understand what

is going on, or because they have not been encouraged to help. Agents especially need the breadth and depth of vision specialists can bring to the analysis of specific problems. Specialists' advice is also needed as to possible solutions for those problems. In some States many specialists are not conscious of having ever been told what program projection is or what significant contributions they can make.

- C. All agents need help in arranging their work to provide time to assemble data and to work with committees.
- D. Most agents need training so they can help committees function more efficiently and effectively.
- E. All agents and some specialists and supervisors need help in the analytical phase of program projection work. Special emphasis is needed on:
 - 1. Methods of involving local people in collection and interpretation of local data.
 - 2. Understanding of the relation between State, national, and world affairs and specific problems in a county, i. e., market for a product.
 - 3. Projection of trends to assess probable future situations and needs.
 - 4. Selection and analysis of relative data to aid in identification of basic problems.
- F. Agents need help with visual methods of presenting background data.
- G. All States need to develop some plan for evaluation of both achievements and methods.
- H. Agents and county committee members need help in understanding how to plan and carry out a county extension program that will aid in solving the problems of agriculture, family living, and youth that are identified by the program projection committees. Following are some of the steps involved in this process:
 - 1. If the program projection committees worked on a broad concept, the first step will be to decide which of the problems identified by the committees Extension will work on. This will require consideration of Extension's resources, as well as professional competence.
 - 2. Decide who on the extension staff and what extension groups in the county will assume primary responsibility for working upon

each specific problem. If a total county extension program is envisioned, the problems selected will include some in the areas of family living and youth as well as those of agriculture.

3. Explore the problems from all angles, consider whether there are several possible solutions, decide upon a plan of action, and what, if any, cooperation of other agencies and groups will be involved.
 4. Develop a plan of work that places major attention upon the solution of the selected problems.
- I. Program projection was originally conceived as a means of pulling certain common features of county-evolved extension programs, particularly in marketing, agricultural adjustments, etc., into programs transcending county and even State-district, statewide and regional lines, thereby forming a more adequate basis for developing the most pertinent and efficient extension programs and a better understanding of Extension's objectives and functions on a local, State, and national basis. More attention needs to be give to this conception of beyond-county program development.

